7: International Bank N, S-4 (1951) 1952 MH1 Iraq MH1

influence. He would need to work in close cooperation with the proposed abattoir specialist. The Association should also investigate the possibility of using more local materials in the hides and skins industry. Thus local valonia or oak bark might be employed for tanning and locally refined and sulphurated fish oils used in the leather industry. Efforts might also be made to procure better salt at reasonable prices from the government salt works at Fao and to organize more adequate local supplies of date syrup which small tanneries use as a glucose.

Casings

Most if not all the casings are obtained from the abattoirs in barrels. Initial cleaning and grading is usually done on the floor which is occasionally washed down with water. The casings examined appeared to be remarkably free of parasitic infection, particularly in the North. More hygienic casings could be produced under more efficient and comfortable working conditions if the work were raised from the floor to zinc-lined tables and improved drainage and piped water supplies were provided in the sections dealing with casings.

Other Improvements in Abattoirs

Many abattoir buildings are in need of repair, enlargement and alteration. Improvements such as an impervious floor, better drainage and water supplies can often be effected at small cost. At present abattoir offal is largely wasted even though the amount involved would warrant the installation of modern methods of converting it into glue, bone meal, blood meal, etc. In order to encourage more slaughtering at the government-supervised abattoirs, it might also be desirable to review the taxes assessed at the abattoir which encourage livestock owners to resort to illicit slaughter.

Wool

The wool collected from the various fat-tailed varieties of sheep makes a good carpet wool and a valuable export product. Little attention is given, however, to good shearing, perhaps because milk rather than wool is considered the main product of the flocks. Shearing is done with crude hand shears. Wool is frequently left on the head and neck region and around the root of

7: International Bank N, S-4 (1951) 1952 MH1 Iraq MH1

236 the tail, and in many cases not even all the "clippable" wool is taken from the body and legs. It is suggested, therefore, that one or more Australian wool clippers be recruited to teach several Iraqis, preferably shepherds, the proper way to secure a maximum clip. These trained clippers, who would be in government service, would then be assigned to clipping sheds which, with proper shearing equipment, should be established in one or two of the main sheep areas, starting, perhaps, with Samawa and Aqra. The tribes would be encouraged to bring their sheep to these sheds where they would be clipped for a small fee in cash or in kind. The sheds could at the same time be used as wool grading stations so that livestock owners could easily see which type of animals pays them best. They might also serve as centers for the collection of goat hair for export. In addition to the stationary clipping sheds, one mobile unit might be tried. The cost of these shearing units, which might be either hand or power driven, would be very small.

235 **Poultry and Eggs**

Poultry, which take a very secondary place in the livestock picture of the average village, are generally of nondescript breeds and feed themselves primarily through uncontrolled scavenging supplemented by an occasional handful of grain. No thought is given to breeding a better type bird or a bird which will produce larger eggs over a longer laying season. Yet the possibility of developing better and more productive poultry through proper feeding and management has already been demonstrated by work carried on by the government. In the future, poultry units should be established for demonstration and breeding purposes on all government agricultural stations. Experimental work on the control of parasites and on the construction of cheap poultry houses out of locally available materials should be carried on at Abu Ghuraib, Bakrajo and possibly Basra. Farmers should be asked to come and observe the results of good management and to draw better breeding stock from these agricultural stations. One or two of the larger farmers might be encouraged to undertake the raising of poultry on a large scale as an experiment. There will certainly be a growing domestic market for poultry and eggs, and it may ultimately be possible to cater to the markets of Gulf ports and the oil company settlements in the Middle East.